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Implementation of recommendations on the six mandated areas of the Forum and on the Millennium Development Goals

Information received from the United Nations system and other intergovernmental organizations

United Nations Development Fund for Women

Summary

Since 1994, the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) has been developing projects and programmes that respond to the need to incorporate gender-related indigenous issues at the forefront of its agenda. Integrating indigenous women's rights is fundamental to UNIFEM, and it seeks to more fully develop and expand its existing projects while eliciting the cooperation and support of other United Nations agencies.

* E/C.19/2008/1.

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I. Introduction

1. The programme of the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) focuses on advocacy for indigenous women's rights and on eliminating discrimination. The UNIFEM approach is based on mainstreaming gender and women's human rights into its programme by engaging indigenous groups, women and girls and enhancing civic engagement through strategic partnerships between women's organizations and advocacy groups.

II. Response to recommendations addressed exclusively to the United Nations Development Fund for Women

2. UNIFEM has continued to foster networking and advocacy by indigenous women, ensuring their participation in key global and regional events, such as the sessions of the Commission on the Status of Women in New York and the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues in 2007 and the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean Tenth Regional Conference on Women, held in July 2007 in Quito. This has contributed to a stronger presence of indigenous women's issues in conference outcomes and an increased dialogue between feminist and indigenous women's networks.

3. For the Tenth Regional Conference on Women, UNIFEM ensured that indigenous women were present and that their voices were heard. It supported the participation of indigenous women and encouraged Latin American Governments to include them in their delegations. UNIFEM supported the indigenous women's pre-conference, where leaders of organizations met with women leaders of Afro-descendant organizations to agree on a common agenda and advocacy strategy to influence the outcome of the Regional Conference. As result of this advocacy, ethnic and racial issues were included in the official declaration of the conference, the Quito Declaration.

4. In addition, UNIFEM, in collaboration with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW) and the secretariat of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, organized the panel on the theme "Citizenship, participation and the rights of indigenous and Afro-descendant women" in the context of the Tenth Regional Conference on Women. In an overflowing room, leaders of indigenous women's organizations — Otilia Lux de Coti, Margarita Antonio, Mirian Mazaquiza and Afro-descendant leader Inés Barbosa — addressed issues of political participation within the indigenous and Afro-descendant movement and in political parties.

5. UNIFEM has supported indigenous women's organizations to build common agendas and present their demands to key stakeholders. In Guatemala, organizations of indigenous women presented their common agenda to the agencies of the United Nations system in the country, and in Mexico, indigenous women agreed upon a national agenda and a federal agenda for the state of Guerrero. In Paraguay, UNIFEM provided financial support to the National Coordination of Labour Organizations of Rural and Indigenous Women. With this support, two national meetings were organized in which 400 women participated.

6. In Brazil, UNIFEM supported the participation of indigenous and Afro-descendant women in the National Conference on Policies for Women in Brazil. This event was promoted by the Ministry of Policies for Women and attracted more than 2,500 women delegates from all 28 states in the country.

7. Building effective tools for advocacy has been undertaken in the Andean region with indigenous women in order to strengthen their capacity to influence policymaking in such areas as poverty and violence against women.

III. Response to recommendations addressed to one or more agencies or to the United Nations system in general

8. UNIFEM has been working towards raising the awareness and capacities of representatives from national statistics offices, national women's machineries, indigenous organizations and United Nations agencies from over 18 countries to develop and use gender statistics. UNIFEM supported the Eighth International Meeting on Gender Statistics for Public Policies, held in Aguascalientes, Mexico. That meeting included session on indigenous women and the measuring of poverty from a gender perspective.

9. In Paraguay, the UNIFEM programme on incorporating gender and racial and ethnic equality dimensions into poverty eradication programmes in four Latin American countries supported the production of sex-disaggregated indicators on poverty, race and ethnicity in order to highlight the situation of indigenous and Guaraní-speaking women. In Brazil, the same programme supported the development of a series of indicators on poverty, race and ethnicity, developed and updated by the Research Institute on Applied Economics of the Brazilian Ministry of Planning.

10. UNIFEM has been actively participating in inter-agency initiatives to include the issues of indigenous women in their programmes and policies. In Bolivia, UNIFEM participates in the United Nations country team group on gender and interculturality, and, thanks to the efforts of UNIFEM in that group, the recommendations of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues have been gathered, disseminated and used to lobby the Under-Secretary for Gender Affairs. In addition, the group has been advocating and supporting the publication of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women in the Quechua language to serve as tool in the capacity-building of indigenous women in the area of women's human rights.

11. UNIFEM participates in the United Nations Development Group task team on indigenous issues, which is developing guidelines on indigenous peoples' issues for United Nations country teams. This has resulted in gender issues and indigenous women's human rights being covered in the final guidelines through inputs at several stages and a review of the final draft.

12. During the 2007 session of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, UNIFEM organized its annual meeting between representatives of the International Indigenous Women's Forum (FIMI) and United Nations agencies (UNFPA, UNDP, the United Nations Children's Fund, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights) to share the work of the agencies with indigenous women and to further discuss ways of cooperation.

13. The work of UNIFEM with indigenous women includes initiatives to strengthen indigenous women's political participation. In Bolivia, UNIFEM and a national non-governmental organization supported the political lobby of indigenous women to include the demands of indigenous women in southern Bolivia and in the province of Cochabamba. As a result, the new Constitution in Bolivia includes responses to indigenous women's demands. This process involved working closely with indigenous women to strengthen their advocacy skills.

14. Also in Bolivia, 610 indigenous female leaders of the Bartolina Sisa Federation of Peasant Women were trained in an initiative led by UNIFEM. The training strengthened indigenous women's leadership abilities, monitoring processes and lobbying tools to influence public policies. Subsequently, the training was replicated for 7,620 indigenous women across the country.

15. The work of UNIFEM in the eradication of violence against women includes the dissemination of knowledge by supporting strategic studies on violence against indigenous women and packaging these studies in a user-friendly way to inform advocacy and planning. For example, it supported the production and dissemination of the FIMI report "Mairin iwanka raya: indigenous women stand against violence" and its translation into Spanish so that it could be disseminated in Latin America. The report serves as a companion to the Secretary-General's study on violence against women.

16. In Bolivia and Ecuador, non-governmental organizations, indigenous organizations and local governments have an increased capacity to improve access to justice in cases of violence against indigenous women. In 2006 the United Nations Trust Fund in Support of Actions to Eliminate Violence Against Women, managed by UNIFEM, financed a project in Bolivia and Ecuador to improve access to justice for indigenous women in Sucumbíos, Ecuador, and Pando, Bolivia, through two main strategies: (a) awareness-raising among indigenous leaders and indigenous communities on violence against women, with the aim of recognizing it as a problem and exploring mechanisms to address it, and (b) awareness-raising among public officials to provide culturally responsive and adequate services to women victims of violence. In Guatemala, the Trust Fund is supporting a project that works on the eradication of violence against women in Mayan communities of Quetzaltenango by increasing their abilities in advocacy for the eradication of such violence and improving access to services for victims. In Nicaragua, the Trust Fund supported the development of a model for services for female victims of violence in two municipalities that will be applied in Afro-descendant and Miskito communities on the Atlantic coast. The project will improve data collection and local services and train the police in providing attention to victims.

17. In Ecuador, UNIFEM has supported different initiatives to increase indigenous women leaders' capacities to effectively address violence against women from an intercultural perspective, including a workshop on the impact of violence on the health of indigenous women, where 100 participants agreed on specific demands to the Government, particularly on improving access to formal and informal justice systems. In Cotacachi, Ecuador, UNIFEM provided technical assistance for a participatory process in which a local legal framework for indigenous communities was developed and approved. UNIFEM supported the organization of the eighth National Assembly of the National Council of Indigenous Women of Ecuador (CONMIE). That meeting included violence against women as one of the main

issues discussed by the 80 participants. A member of CONMIE spoke at the national launching of the "16 Days of Activism against Gender Violence" campaign.

18. In Bolivia, Ecuador, Peru and the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, UNIFEM financed a project on a regional radio network, to train community radio journalists on the prevention of violence against women. As a result, 55 journalists (about half of them women) from 30 community radio stations increased their capacity in producing radio programmes addressing the issues of violence against women from an ethnic perspective; six radio spots and eight sociodramas in different languages were produced; and 20 radio stations participated in a regional competition. All products were disseminated and broadcast during the "16 Days of Activism against Gender Violence" campaign.

IV. Efforts regarding indigenous peoples and the Millennium Development Goals

19. UNIFEM has been actively working with the United Nations country team in Guatemala, where a gender equality window was granted under the Millennium Development Goal funding mechanism to work on strengthening national institutions and policies on gender, with the participation of indigenous women.

Millennium Development Goal 1

20. In the framework of the UNIFEM programme on incorporating gender and racial and ethnic equality dimensions into poverty eradication programmes in four Latin American countries, UNIFEM and the Facultad Latinoamericana de Ciencias Sociales developed a study on the situation of indigenous women in Guatemala based on data collected by UNDP and indigenous organizations. That study identifies indigenous and Afro-descendant women's organizations in order to build future partnerships for the development of national programmes. Also, in Guatemala, UNIFEM worked closely with the Public Defender of Indigenous Women to strengthen the capacity to incorporate indigenous women's perspectives in public policies and government practices. In Paraguay, UNIFEM developed a study on gender, race and ethnicity inequalities that analyses, from gender, race and ethnic perspectives, the situation of rural, Guaraní-speaking, indigenous and Afro-descendant women. That study was used in the drafting of the shadow report on gender to the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, coordinated by the Latin American and Caribbean Committee for the Defence of Women's Rights of Paraguay, in partnership with other civil society organizations.

V. Subjects given special emphasis by the Permanent Forum

21. The work of UNIFEM on indigenous women and collection and disaggregation of data has been addressed above.

VI. Obstacles to the implementation of recommendations of the Permanent Forum

22. In paragraph 105 of its report on its sixth session,[1] the Permanent Forum called on the Special Rapporteur on violence against women, its causes and consequences and the Special Rapporteur on trafficking in persons, especially women and children, to hold regional consultations with indigenous women in Asia, and requested that UNIFEM support such consultations. UNIFEM was informed that the regional consultations could be held.

VII. Facilitating factors for the implementation of recommendations of the Permanent Forum

23. The Permanent Forum had very few recommendations for UNIFEM, and many of the previous recommendations are covered in the UNIFEM programmatic priorities.

VIII. Policies on indigenous peoples' issues

24. Outcome 6 of the 2008-2011 strategic plan of UNIFEM states that the most marginalized women (HIV-positive women, women informal sector workers, migrant women, indigenous women, women survivors of sexual and gender-based violence in conflict situations, women with disabilities, etc.) should have increased resources, capacities and voice to ensure that their priorities are included in relevant national policies, programmes and budgets.

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[1] *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 2007, Supplement No. 23* (E/2007/43).